

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 3, 2019

The Honorable Betsy DeVos  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

On behalf of our constituents, we write to express our serious concerns about the Department of Education's implementation of the critically needed Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

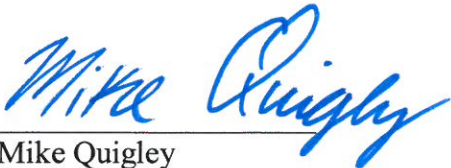
As we feared, the Department of Education's own data shows that in the first year of the program's eligibility, less than 1% of the over 28,000 applicants received loan forgiveness, which was only 96 people. While we understand that many of these individuals may be able to remedy the reasons that they were initially rejected and that some may not have qualified, a great many dedicated public servants who relied on this program will not be able to receive relief due to years of unclear standards, confusing procedures, and a lack of meaningful guidance from the Department. The Department's mishandling of this program has led to confusion and inconsistent information for borrowers who simply want to serve the public and relied on the student debt relief promised by this program in dedicating their careers to helping their communities.

Because so many dedicated public servants unexpectedly were unable to benefit from the PSLF program, Congress set up a temporary relief program last year that was funded at \$700 million for borrowers who believed in good faith that they were making qualifying PSLF payments. Once again, however, the Department has created unreasonable barriers to entry to this new program, and unclear qualification standards. As a result, only 262 people of the over 38,000 people who applied for this program received relief, and only a total of \$10.6 million in loans were forgiven – leaving \$690 million of the amount Congress appropriated on the table. Our delegation is very concerned that both of these programs continue to fall far short of what was promised to dedicated public servants and the communities they serve, in Illinois and throughout the country.

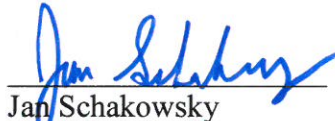
Whether it is police officers, firefighters, teachers, or the many other dedicated public servants serving our communities, we know that PSLF has had a tremendous positive impact, helping to recruit and retain talented and dedicated people to pursue these careers that are so critical to the health and welfare of our country. People seeking public service positions make what are often significant financial sacrifices to pursue these career paths. The weight of growing educational debt can easily turn that financial sacrifice into a longer-term financial struggle, and PSLF has helped to encourage talented and dedicated individuals to pursue and remain in these careers.

For these reasons, we request a timeline on the Department's plan to use appropriated outreach funds to reach all Direct Loan borrowers about PSLF and fully digitize the employment certification and application process. Our constituents, and communities across Illinois, rely on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program for financial security. We look forward to hearing from you.

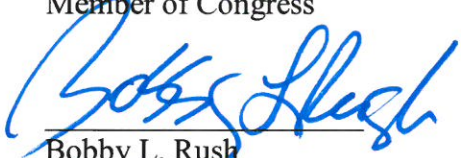
Sincerely,



Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



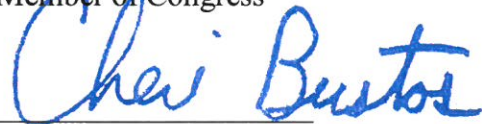
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



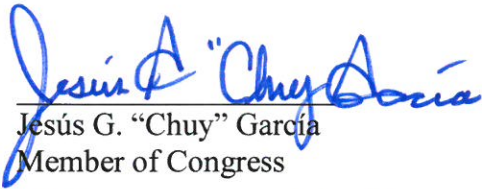
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



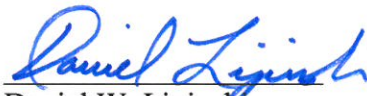
Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress



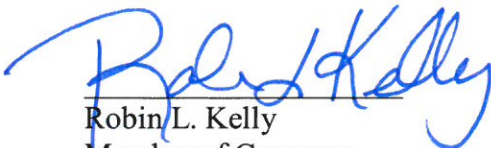
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress




Daniel W. Lipinski  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress